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EARLY PIETY.

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A PLAIN  
CHRISTIAN'S MANUAL;

OR,

Six Plain Sermons

ON

EARLY PIETY, THE SACRAMENTS,

AND

MAN'S LATTER END



Uncontroverted, but suited to the Present Time.

---

BY JOHN WOOD WARTER, B.D.

CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD,

VICAR OF WEST TARRING, SUSSEX,

Rural Dean, and Surrogate.

---

"To me, to whom God hath revealed his Son, in a Gospel, by a Church, there can be no way of salvation, but by applying that Son of God, by that Gospel, in that Church."—DONNE'S SERMONS.

"Sermons should be instructions, not declamations, or displaying curious thoughts, which may amuse, but not edify Christians."

BP. WILSON, *Sacr. Priv.*

"There is a great deal of difference betwixt people admiring a preacher, and being edified by his sermons."—IBID.

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London:

FRANCIS & JOHN RIVINGTON,

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD, AND WATERLOO PLACE.

1850.

"Train up thy children, England, in the ways  
Of righteousness, and feed them with the bread  
Of wholesome doctrine."

SOUTHEY.

"I am neither so vain or so inexperienced as to imagine that any thing which I may offer will change any man's opinions ; but I may fix them where they are unconfirmed, make the scale turn when it is wavering, and give a right bias to those who are beginning their career."—SOUTHEY.  
*Letter to Bishop Jebb. Life and Corr. v. 146.*

"What Church hath one Lord, Jesus Christ the Righteous,—one Faith in that Lord,—one Baptism in that Faith,—it is the One Dove of Christ."—BR. HALL.

TO THE  
PARISHIONERS  
OF  
WEST TARRING, HEENE, AND DURRINGTON,  
SUSSEX,

*The Manual following*

AFTER "THE PLAIN TEACHING OF THE PRAYER BOOK,"

WITH EVERY FEELING OF SINCERE ATTACHMENT,

(AFTER A TRIAL OF SIXTEEN YEARS,)

IS GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY

THEIR AFFECTIONATE PASTOR AND FRIEND,

JOHN WOOD WARTER.





## PREFACE.

---

IN dedicating these pages to my Parishioners, amongst whom I have resided these many years, I do it for God's glory, and with great good will towards them. It gives me the opportunity likewise of thankfully recording the fact, that when an attempt has been made in these Parishes to desecrate GOOD FRIDAY, they have very properly not done so, but have thronged the church to overflowing, as though they would declare, each one severally, in the words of Nehemiah, "SO DID NOT I, BECAUSE OF THE FEAR OF GOD <sup>1</sup>." Of such advantage

<sup>1</sup> Neh. v. 15.

is it to have, in an agricultural Parish like this, the best of Churchwardens, who know the power of example; and excellent masters, who know that they have a Master in heaven. Usually it will be found true, "LIKE MASTER LIKE MAN."

I will only add:—The Prophet Jonah was awakened by a PAGAN, who "came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not<sup>2</sup>." Then, as we would shun evil example, and teach our people to follow what is good, ourselves leading the way, let us make the most of deliberate profaneness, and faithfully impress upon each one committed to our trust,—as, to a certain extent, is the case with every servant

<sup>2</sup> Jonah i. 6.

and his master,—this text of St. Paul, adapted to his purpose from the Evangelical Prophet Isaiah, “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light<sup>3</sup>.” God forgive my many and great imperfections, my unprofitableness, my inefficient labours amongst my poor and destitute people!

<sup>3</sup> Ephes. v. 14.

VICARAGE, WEST TARRING, SUSSEX ;

*July 15th, 1850.*



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# SERMON I.

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## EARLY PIETY.

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JOB viii. 4—7.

“If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away for their transgression; If thou wouldest seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to the Almighty; If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous. Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase.”

I PURPOSE, Christian Brethren, from these verses, to speak a word on **EARLY PIETY**,—a possession than which earth hath none greater, inasmuch as it is twice blessed, being the blessing both of children and of their parents. More-

over, like the possessions of this world, it passeth not away, but endureth ever, if it ripen well, and continue unto the end. In other words, if **EARLY PIETY** settle down into solid and well-grounded religious faith and practice, it passeth the grave and the gate of death, and is consigned over to everlasting habitations, and to "the inheritance of the saints in light." Certain it is,—there is nothing more certain,—that from a child (as St. Paul said to Timothy) to have "known the Holy Scriptures," is "able to make" a man "wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." And our blessed Lord's own words, applied to Christian Baptism, wherein children are made regenerate, or, born anew, assuredly look this way: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." Bright as are the stars in the heavens, and lovely as are the loveliest spots on earth, yet is there nothing

brighter, nothing lovelier, than a child brought up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Witness the history of "the child Samuel," that "ministered unto the Lord before Eli!" Of whom it is recorded that he "grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground." Witness that all-blessed childhood of our only Lord and Saviour; so beautiful! so attractive! and which should be the model and the pattern for us all; and how of Him it is said, that "he went down with" his parents, "and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them, and increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." Surely from that time forth the estate of childhood was blessed, and the beauty of EARLY PIETY shone forth, never to be forgotten more!

Then, as I said, I will speak a word upon this point yet again, on which I have spoken so often, and for so many

years. First, however, it will be well to look to the passage of Scripture from which the verses of the text are taken, in which a parent's duty is set forth, and the evil entailed upon "children that are corrupters" declared. Neither let us forget, any one of us, how we read, in the very early pages of Scripture, that "Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord slew him." As "wickedness proceedeth from the wicked," so, when unrepented of, and continued in, doth it bring forth death! And when a child dieth in its wickedness, God knoweth best! It is amongst his secret things; or whether it were for the parent's sin, or that it should be removed from more evil yet to come! This we know not; but we *do* know that God is merciful and gracious; and, as the wise widow of Tekoah said to David, "Doth devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him."

And thus it turned out in the history of Job and of his children, about whom one messenger escaped alone to say, "Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house; And behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead."

Now, with reference to this and his other sad losses, and his own personal affliction, Job, in the preceding chapter, had, to use the words of the Psalmist, "mourned in his complaint, and made a noise;" and the verses of the text are a part of one of those three friends' answers, who "had made an appointment together to mourn with him and to comfort him." And in what he spake, Bildad the Shuhite spake well, save only when he concluded that Job could not be acceptable to God, because he was in adversity; "for gold is tried in

the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of adversity;" and we know from God's after dealings with Job how "perfect and upright" a man he was, notwithstanding his failings as a man. From whence also we draw this comfortable conclusion, as well as from the failings of other saints and worthies, that "the best of men are but men at best." One only is without sin: that is "THE HOLY ONE OF GOD."

But in what Bildad had said, "If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away for their transgression," and in the verses which next follow, in which Job is summoned to prayer, it would seem as though the Shuhite knew not of Job's custom as a father, recorded in this Book for our instruction: "And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt-offerings, according to the

number of them all; for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually;”—that is to say, he had brought them up well and prayerfully, and like a good father, and even when they had come to man's estate, they were still constantly in his thoughts, and the subject of his prayers. And the last chapter of this most instructive book shows well how God “accepted” him, and how “the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning.” As a father, he had done his duty; and in the place of the children that he had lost, he had “seven sons and three daughters.” And the words of the prophet are applicable here: “BEHOLD, I, AND THE CHILDREN WHOM THE LORD HATH GIVEN ME!” The perfect man was not cast out, and, so to say, his banished ones were restored unto him: even as in the world to come good children and good parents



will meet again, where is no sorrow, nor crying, nor parting more !

But, Christian Brethren, if this be so, we must endeavour so to part, as that, through Christ, who is "the resurrection and the life," we may assuredly meet again. And this, as far as in us lies, we shall bring about most readily, by teaching our children to "remember" their "Creator in the days of their youth,"—in other words, by instilling into them lessons of EARLY PIETY, and bringing them up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." And looked upon in this light, the words of Bildad the Shuhite are teaching words for all parents who have teachable spirits, and are willing to be schooled in lessons of eternity. Father or Mother, in any Christian land or Christian parish, to you is this word spoken, "If THOU wouldest seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to the Almighty; If THOU wert

pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous. Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase."

And thus you have in Job's history,—1st, his intercession as a father for his children; 2ndly, the assurance that such as do look to the soul's health of their children shall not be unblessed,—yea, doubly blessed, in their offspring, and in themselves. For, if according to the Proverb of Solomon, "A wise son,"—wise, that is, unto salvation, which is the only real and enduring wisdom,—"maketh a glad father," that other proverb is none the less true, "A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children!"


Then, Christian Brethren, admitting that all children are born in sin, and that the stain of Adam's transgression passeth upon all that are born into this world of sadness, of sickness, and of sorrow; let us all be mindful as parents,

that our children be admitted, as soon as may be, within the borders of the covenant, from whence afterwards they can only be cast out by their own transgression; "for it is certain by God's Word, that children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved." So that the first step towards EARLY PIETY is Christian Baptism, in the which most sacred rite, our most merciful Father which is in heaven doth regenerate infants with his Holy Spirit, receive them for his own by adoption, and incorporate them into his holy Church, purchased by the blood of his only and all-beloved Son. As one said; "It hath been the doctrine constantly with general consent delivered in and by the Catholic Church, that to all persons, by the holy mystery of Baptism duly initiated into Christianity, and admitted into the communion of Christ's body, the grace of the Holy Spirit is communicated, enabling them

to perform the conditions of piety and virtue which they undertake; and continually watching over them for accomplishment of those purposes; which Spirit they are admonished not to resist, to abuse, to grieve, to quench; but to use it well, and to use its grace to the working out their salvation." Clearly, then, the first duty of a parent is to bring the child to the font. The steps of it are the first access to EARLY PIETY. They who are thus grafted into God's house have "a nail in his holy place!"

Next, for the increase of EARLY PIETY, the infant lip must be taught to lisp its prayers at a mother's knee, and to "perfect praise" with its little "stammering tongue." And then, as reason dawns, children, whose perceptions are alive to every thing, and on whom early impressions sink the deepest, must find piety at home. The bent knee of the parent will bow their hearts, and, almost before they know their right

hand from their left, they will become habituated to reverence and devotion. And such prayers are not unaccepted at the throne of grace—yea, accepted, rather — for such as are grounded, through faith in Christ, in the artlessness, and truthfulness, and unfeigned simplicity of infancy, are the nighest heaven. “Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.” So spake He who spake as never man spake, holding up children as an example. And therefore, as I said before, parents must “seek unto God betimes” for their children, “and make” their “supplication unto the Almighty.” As far as their sinful nature will admit, they must be “pure and upright,” that their children may walk evenly in their steps, and not be scared by their starting madly out of the right way; which, if they do, in Scripture phrase, the Lord will “awake” for



them, "and make the habitation of" their "righteousness prosperous." Ordinarily, as the Shuhite said, "God will not cast away a perfect man ;"—one that teacheth his children to serve and worship Him. On the contrary, He will fill his "mouth with laughing," and his "lips with rejoicing." And methinks the Psalmist's words will fall into an acceptable prayer: "Save me and deliver me from the hand of strange children; whose mouth talketh of vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of iniquity. That our sons may grow up as the young plants, and that our daughters may be as the polished corners of the temple!"

And thus cherished in holy instruction,—which is what St. Paul calls "the nurture and admonition of the Lord,"—the child will be advancing into boyhood, and "being now come to years of discretion," he must be brought to be confirmed by the Bishop, in other words, to

“renew the solemn promise and vow” that was made for him at his Baptism, and to ratify the same in his own person. And solemn is the season, Christian Brethren, solemn the service, at which the youth takes his vows upon himself! And if he do it thoughtfully, and humbly, and in a holy fear, there is no stint to the heavenly dew of God’s blessing; and he shall be strengthened with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and daily increase in manifold gifts of grace; in “the spirit of wisdom and understanding; the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength; the spirit of knowledge and true godliness.”

And under such circumstances,—when parents and children are so assembled, and a “holy solemnity is kept,”—who saith not? Happy parents! Happy children! For, if age is honoured that feareth God, how beautiful is holy childhood and EARLY PIETY! He that at any time groweth in virtue and in grace,

and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is an object for Christian admiration and Christian love ; but when youth is hallowed,—when holiness unto the Lord is, as it were, set forth on the young man's banner,—then is the sight delightful indeed, and loveable in the highest ! “SURELY GOD IS IN THEE !” is the exclamation of all such as have understanding in the ways of the Lord !

But, Christian Brethren, when the tender years of our children have thus been hedged in by the protection of heaven, and a parent's prayers, or ever he go forth to the world, (in its fuller sense,) *one thing is needful* yet ! To the Table of the Lord he must be brought, that he may have spiritual food to support him on the journey. For there, at this evangelical altar, Christ, “by his omnipotent power, is effectually present by spiritual nourishment and feeding,



as in Baptism he is likewise present by spiritual renewing and regenerating." As in the first sacrament, He is "our spiritual regeneration and apparel;" so, in the other, He is "our spiritual meat and drink." Therefore, that he may taste at starting of this heavenly sustenance, let the parent compass the altar with his child. For leave-taking there is no holier place, and if the "FAREWELL" should be the long one and the last, this inculcation of EARLY PIETY will be a comfort to the parent in days of darkness and of trouble, and to the child a blessed memorial of a parent's duty towards him. Anyways, a duty so gone through, is twice blessed. The parent and the child together are partakers in the blessing; nor need we doubt to say that the angels in heaven rejoice at such a sight, as we know they do (for Christ hath said it) when the errors of a man's life are forsaken and he turneth him to

his God:—"There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth!"

Ye do see, then, Christian Brethren, how great a thing is EARLY PIETY, and how the happiness of families, religiously considered, is bound up in it. And, looking to this great truth, God spake thus of old time, of the father of the faithful, "I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." And, in the Law again, how read we? "Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons."—"Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children."—"Ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou

walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Then, under the Prophets, of such great things concerning salvation, of which Israel's deliverance was a token and a pledge, David said, "We have heard and known, and our fathers have told us, that we should not hide them from the children of the generations to come."

EARLY PIETY, that is, was first and foremost; and Solomon, who spake so many Proverbs, and which are marvels of instruction still, spake none wiser than this, "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it;"—that is to say, in the ordinary course of things he will not, for early impressions are lasting. And besides this, the goodness of the Almighty and most merciful God goeth before such as have been well schooled in his ways, and, in the midst of sore temptations and of danger, is their "rereward" also. Before or be-

hind, on the right hand and on the left, above, below, and round about, *there* is his all-gracious presence: "They shall not be confounded in the perilous time." "The angel of the Lord tarrieth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." So true is Ben Sirach's saying, "They that fear the Lord are a sure seed, and they that love him an honourable plant." Whereas, "They that regard not the law are a dishonour and a shame; they that transgress the commandments are a deceivable seed."

Simple, then, is the question, and as simple the answer, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? even by ruling himself after thy word." Like unto EARLY PIETY possession is there none, no rule is like to it; and the earlier it is abided by, instead of the bending canon of the world, the better, the straighter, will the course of the individual be. Thou, young man, whoever thou art, "Remember now thy

Creator in the days of thy youth.”  
“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart,  
and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

## SERMON II.

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CHRIST BLESSETH THE CHILDREN THAT  
ARE BROUGHT UNTO HIM.

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MARK X. 13—16.

“And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.”

ON this, and on another well-known occasion, when the disciples had disputed among themselves who should be the

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greatest, the Lord of life instructed them by the presence of little children. And sure, if ever sight was beautiful on earth, it must have been the sight of little children in the arms of Christ, the Saviour of the world ! He that was God from everlasting, but who, *in time*, had condescended to the weaknesses and inabilities and helplessness of childhood, loved this estate, and held up their comparative innocency of life as an example unto all : “ Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter therein.” And so as Christ received little children, doth his Church likewise, simply asserting, that “ the Baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ.” And, forasmuch as the passage which is selected as the text, hath been always, even from the times of those who followed the Apostles, thought to


look this way, it has been embodied in the Baptismal Service, and the following brief exhortation upon the Gospel is what you hear so often read: "Beloved, ye hear in this Gospel the words of our Saviour Christ, that He commanded the children to be brought unto Him; how He would have blamed those that would have kept them from Him; how He exhorteth all men to follow their innocency. Ye perceive how by his outward gesture and deed He declared his good will toward them; for He embraced them in his arms, He laid his hands upon them, and blessed them. Doubt ye not therefore, but earnestly believe, that He will likewise favourably receive this present infant; that He will embrace him with the arms of his mercy; that He will give unto him the blessing of eternal life, and make him partaker of his everlasting kingdom."

Under this full persuasion we bring the child to the font, as our fathers



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did before us, and their fathers before them, and we behold the hand of Christ stretched out still; and He receives little children to Himself, as "members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven." And thus are they written down on the muster-roll of salvation, put in the ranks of, and "ordained to, eternal life." And although many (as we do but too well know) fall out by the way, and desert their post as soldiers of an immortal band, they were pledged to better things, and "things accompanying salvation." For, they were received "into the congregation of Christ's flock, and" signed "with the sign of the cross, in token that hereafter" they should "not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil; and to continue Christ's faithful soldiers and servants unto their life's end."



Thus, after Christ's example, and in conformity with his teaching, the Church taketh up little children, and helpeth those who cannot help themselves. As was said of old time, "She lendeth them other men's feet, that they may come ; and other men's hearts that they may believe ; and by this means"—(that is to say, by the salvific virtue of Christ's atoning blood)—"being by nature born in sin and the children of wrath, they are hereby made the children of grace."

Christ Himself, who knew no sin, was yet baptized "to fulfil all righteousness." We may therefore easily perceive that the innocence of infants, and their freedom from actual sin, cannot excuse them from Baptism. "And if we remember that although our blessed Saviour required faith of them who came to be healed of their diseases, yet by the faith of others, who came in behalf of such as could not be brought, or could not come, the sick person was healed ; we

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are sufficiently instructed, that although infants have no more actual faith than they have actual sin, yet the faith of others can be, and is, by the usual revealed method of the Divine mercy, as well imputed to them, to the purposes of grace and life, as the sin of Adam can be imputed to the purposes of death; that "as in Adam all die, so in Christ all should be made alive." Certainly, the baptism of infants is "an ordinance which Christ hath instituted even in special love and favour to his own people;" and "we bear not towards God so unthankful minds as not to acknowledge it even amongst the greatest of his endless mercies, that by making it his own possession so soon, many advantages which Satan otherwise might take are prevented, and (which should be esteemed a part of no small happiness), the first thing whereof we have occasion to take notice is, how much hath been done already to our

great good, though altogether without our knowledge."

Better things are provided under the new than were under the old dispensation, and Christians, as such, are the "children of the promise," and the seed of the Church. So that, in some sense, did we deny the Sacrament of Baptism to our children, the infant Jew that was circumcised on the eighth day was better off than the Christian whose Baptism is deferred. But Christ, the Lord, hath seen to this, and, if not "by special command," yet by "his act and deed,"—by taking the little children up in his arms, putting his hands upon them, and blessing them,—He hath consigned to them the privileges of the Gospel. "Circumcision" now profiteth nothing. Old things are done away; but in *Baptism* "the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; faith is con-

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firmed, and grace exercised, by virtue of prayer unto God ;” and infants are not unblessed, but capacitated in Christ. As is the kingdom of heaven, such are they !

But further still, there *is* a *special command*—at least, it were difficult to understand the matter otherwise—comparing Scripture with Scripture. For, when the Lord Jesus Christ was about to leave this earth, and to return to those “heavens” which He “bowed” when He came down, emptying Himself of the glory which was his own from all eternity, He said unto his disciples, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Here, clearly, all that are *disciples* are commanded to be baptized ; and, as appertained to children, there was no new thing to be done, for even the children of converts to Judaism were always so admitted within the bounds of the covenant. This our Sa-

viour left as it was; so that his command to "baptize all nations," without especial notice to the contrary, would include infants as it had done heretofore. They were not strangers to covenanted mercies under the Circumcision, much less so would they be under the Gospel Dispensation, where shadows and types were to be consummated in realities, and Christ, "who shed out of his most precious side both water and blood," called all unto Himself by the "laver of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." Most certainly, on infants is the continual dew of his blessing shed. "Being justified by his grace," they are "made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." They *can* receive the kingdom of God, because Christ hath said it; they *do* receive it, because He is merciful, and ever calleth such unto Him.

Therefore, ye Christian people, be mindful on this point, and do as your

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Lord commanded. "Suffer little children" to be presented to Him by the Church, and He who loved the Church, so as to die for it, will bless them everlastingly, and at the same time ripen your faith in Him. Yea, let the little children be brought, as Christ Himself was brought, to be "presented to the Lord;" and when it may be, as mostly it may, within the precincts of his sanctuary. Be sure your "foot standeth right" when you "praise the Lord in the congregations." It never was said in vain, "In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee."

And then, besides the inestimable blessing of Christian Baptism, unto such as are careful on this matter, there is likewise an additional blessing by the way. They who bring their little ones to serve the Lord are themselves perfected in that acceptable service which belongeth unto God. As their offspring

increase in stature, so do they “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” As they teach their children their duties, their own imperfections and their own short-comings rise up before them; the gift and the grace of repentance is received with joy, as flowing from the atonement; and they learn in the school of Christ the very truth of his own most sacred words: “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven;” neither the kingdom of grace here, nor the kingdom of glory hereafter.

And thus doth the text lead us by the hand, and the consideration of the Baptism of infants brings home to each thoughtful heart — though he were “ninety years old and more”—those words of the Lord when He “appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.” For who, Christian Bre-



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thren, when he examines his own heart, finds perfectness there? who is in spirit humble as the little child that hath large room consigned to it in the kingdom of Christ and of God?

But and if any object, that the thus instancing of little children would seem to militate with the Bible truth that speaks of man as a "transgressor from the womb," and born in sin, (although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized); be it answered unto such that the Lord Jesus Christ doth not instance children as *sinless*, but as humble and fit recipients of his kingdom and of Himself, who was "meek and lowly of heart." Sin they have, as all have birth sin; but it is the trustfulness, the humility, the artlessness, the docility, and the simplicity of children, which is referred to—and in all these senses they are ensamples unto all such as are rather grown in years and in stature than in

goodness, and in readiness to forgive others, and in teachableness, and in undesigning openness. And perhaps it is not undeserving of our notice, that the parallel passage in St. Luke is introduced in connexion with the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, than which no other parable teaches us better “the mind that was in Christ Jesus.” And so “the kingdom of grace, the Church, consisteth of children in age or in manners, of them and such as they are; and the kingdom of glory, or heaven, shall be filled with infants blessed by Christ, and with men become as little children.” Such Christ receiveth, as He did the infants in the text; and the sooner the better, Christian Brethren, we come to the understanding of this matter, that, to receive the kingdom of God “as a little child,” is in the obedience of the faith, with all humility and lowliness, to submit to the Gospel, to receive the doctrines, to obey

### 34 CHRIST BLESSETH THE CHILDREN

the precepts. In this sense practice is knowledge, and we all know that knowledge is power. Happy any who is, so to say, Jacob no longer, but the Israel of God! Happy any unto whom the Lord hath said, "As a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed!" Sure I am if any *doth* follow his Lord in the way, his understanding shall be enlightened, "and his flesh" shall come "again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he" shall be "clean!" In our Lord's own words, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God!"

Christian Brethren, we do wonder at the question put, and at such a time too, by the mother of Zebedee's children, when she said, "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on the right hand, the other on the left, in thy kingdom." It was an ambitious wish, and had respect to earthly honours, though in heaven, and although the

Lord of life had been foretelling his passion. More or less, perhaps, we are offended at the question. But have we taken the lead in hand, and have we fathomed our own hearts? Have we, baptized into Christ as infants, sought what is there? The chances are, that, whether rich or poor, we are pretty much under the same influences; neither have we laid to heart what the prophet said of old unto Baruch, who fainted in his sighing, and found no rest. "And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not."

Certainly, to reach heaven at the last, we must use all diligence, and good thrift is it that our thoughts and conversations be always there. But we must not mingle the "dross" of earth with "pure gold." We must be ambitious, not of what is of the earth, earthy, but of what is heavenly in temper; lest there be no entrance found there for such as are not like to little

### 36 CHRIST BLESSETH THE CHILDREN

children, but are unprepared to perfect praise. Be assured our "inward parts" are not hid from Him with whom we have to do ; and if, in the stead of the humbleness and the innocency of the little child, there be found in us the very reverse of this—that is to say, unscrupulous ambition, and pride, and hypocrisy, and anger, and wrath, and clamour, and envy, and malice, and revenge, and whatsoever else there be contrary to childlike simplicity—in that case, unless we be "converted, and become as little children," the everlasting doors of heaven will be closed against us. Thou Christian man, on whom the privilege of Baptism hath passed, or ever thou didst know thy right hand from thy left, remember well, "The Lord seeth not as man seeth ; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." It is the little one in spirit that shall be blessed the most ; the youngest,

so to say, like David—not Eliab, not Abinadab, not Shammah—but the lowly one of heart, the child! As “the Lord said, Arise, anoint him; for this is he.” Such have, verily, “an unction from the Holy One.” His they are, and Him they serve with a perfect and unreserved submission, and they are blessed everlastingly. And hence said David himself when he had sinned and repented him of his sin, and knew that he was accepted, “I refrain my soul, and keep it low, like as a child that is weaned from his mother: yea, my soul is even as a weaned child.”

The sum of the matter is, that the lowlier we are, the purer we are in heart, the liker we are to little children, and, as such, to the kingdom of God. Happy he who in this sense is twice a child, yea, always a child! For, not so much the *age*, but the *mind* and the *disposition* was it, which determined the judgment of our Lord.

### 38 CHRIST BLESSETH THE CHILDREN.

One word in conclusion. Never let us forget how great a matter it is to bring our children to the font; and next, to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Generations to come will praise those who have so devoted themselves, and pious parents, pious teachers, pious masters, will leave a name behind them that shall not perish; yea, a name "better" than even "that of sons and daughters;" an everlasting name not to be put out from the registry of heaven! Their names are in the Book of Life! They shall be found in the assembly of the Lord's people, and written up in the writing that defies the teeth of time. Such shall not be wiped out of the Book of the living, but be "written among the righteous."

"Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men."

## SERMON III.

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### BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER, THEIR CONNEXION, &c.

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EZRA viii. 22.

“The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him ; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him.”

So spake Ezra, the “ready Scribe in the law of Moses,” who “had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.” And the occasion was his return from Babylon to Jerusalem with the gracious commission of Artaxerxes, “to beautify the house of the Lord.” And he was now on his



way, and had gathered his companions together "to the river that runneth to Ahava," "and then," says he, "I proclaimed a fast, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us and for our little ones, and for all our substance. For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way; because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him. So we fasted and besought our God for this; and he was entreated of us." Such was the occasion, and they who had put their trust in the Lord were not confounded, for he adds, "the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way. And we came to Jerusalem."

And enough this for the history, to which you may refer yourselves, and read at length the Book of Ezra, wherein you will find the portraiture of a good man intent upon doing his duty, and so serving faithfully his God.

Meanwhile, my purpose is from the words of the text, which are true to the end of time, to call your attention to the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, under the full assurance that the health and prosperity of a man's soul is just in accordance as "the hand of the Lord is upon him" by reason of his obedience in this matter. As his obedience is to his Lord's command, "This do in remembrance of me," so is mercy extended to each man, and so is he strengthened to go on his way like Ezra, and in his journey towards the Jerusalem which is above, to contend with and to overcome the dangers which beset him. As he doth help himself, as Ezra did, so is God his "helper and

defender." It is the voice of wisdom, let us hear her cry! "Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars; she hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens; she crieth upon the highest places of the city, Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither; as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled. Forsake the foolish and live; and go in the way of understanding."

I. And now, first, touching Sacraments generally necessary to salvation,—that is, where they may be had.—In the Christian Church there are but two ordained by Christ Himself, and these are Baptism and the Lord's Supper; and they are "not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and God's good will

towards us, by the which He doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in Him." So to say, when we are regenerate in Baptism our faith is quickened, is ready to burst into life when reason dawns and we are rightly catechised; and in the Lord's Supper it is strengthened and confirmed. And hence all thoughtful Christians connect these holy rites together and are thankful. "So many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death;" and when we come to his Holy Table we do so, "For the continual remembrance of *the sacrifice of the death of Christ*, and of the benefits which we receive thereby." His death is uppermost in the true communicant's mind, even that "meritorious cross and passion, *whereby alone* we obtain remission of our sins, and are made partakers of the kingdom of heaven."

Would to God, Christian Brethren,

that this were better borne in mind; that those who bring their children to the font would see that they themselves sought more grace at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, therein strengthening and refreshing their own souls, and setting that example to their offspring, which, when impressed in early years, by God's grace, would never be rubbed out by the world's wear and tear. For, mind ye well that He who said, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," and, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," said likewise, "This do in remembrance of me," and, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." So that there is, as it were, an inseparable connexion between these two Sacra-

ments, which are the two breasts of our mother Church, whereby the children of Christ's kingdom are nourished up unto life everlasting. And well said he who wrote, "The grace which we have by the Holy Eucharist doth not begin, but continue life. No man, therefore, receiveth this Sacrament before Baptism, because no dead thing is capable of nourishment. That which groweth must of necessity first live. If our bodies did not daily waste, food to restore them were a thing superfluous. And it may be that the grace of Baptism would serve to eternal life, were it not that the state of our spiritual being is daily so much hindered and impaired after Baptism." However, "life being therefore proposed unto all men as their end, they which by Baptism have laid the foundation, and attained the first beginning of a new life, have had their nourishment and food prescribed for *continuance of life* in them. Such

as will live the life of God must eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man, because this is a part of that diet which, if we want, we cannot live. Whereas, therefore, in our infancy, we are incorporated into Christ, and by Baptism receive the grace of his Spirit without any sense or feeling of the gift which God bestoweth, in the Eucharist we so receive the gift of God, that we know by grace what the grace is which God giveth us; the degrees of our increase in holiness and virtue we see and can judge of them; we understand that the strength of our life began in Christ is Christ; that his flesh is meat and his blood drink, not by surmised imagination, but truly, even so truly, that through faith we perceive in the body and blood, sacramentally presented, the very taste of eternal life; the grace of the Sacrament is here as the food which we eat and drink." As expressed in the Church Catechism, and

never better, the inward part or thing signified by the bread and wine, which the Lord hath commanded to be received, is "The body and blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper;" and the benefits whereof we are partakers thereby, are, "The strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the body and blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the bread and wine."

Here, then, is a great matter laid before you; and, as you would continue in Christ's holy fellowship, and be partakers until your dying day of those inestimable benefits which by his precious bloodshedding He has purchased for you, you will surely see how well, and wise, and Christianlike a thing it is to be in the fear of the Lord all the day long, and, in that fear which ends in perfect love, to connect the Sacraments of the Church together. Baptized into Christ, your remembrance of his death



will be continual, and, as often as ye may, at the Table of the Lord, ye will show that ye are one with Christ, and Christ with you. His all-atoning merits are the *all in all* of the Sacraments of the Christian Church; and they that draw nigh with faith and receive the Lord's Supper worthily, as sure as plant or tree doth grow, do "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

And now, having dwelt upon the two life-giving Sacraments together, I must turn more closely to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, to which I said I should refer the words of the text. "The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek Him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake Him." He of his mercy grant that there be not "a great forsaking in the midst of the land!" that we forsake not "the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is."

II. Next, then, let us speak of the institution of this holy rite, which is the comfort of the living, as affording "spiritual sustenance," and the solace of the dying, inasmuch as in it they apprehend Christ their Saviour, and in Him find a stay and a support when the world is, as it were, dropping from beneath their feet, and the nothingness of mortality is apparent. Then mind:—Our Saviour Jesus Christ (in the words embodied in the Consecration Prayer from the three first Gospels, and from St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians) "in the same night that He was betrayed, took bread; and, when He had given thanks, He brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take, eat; this is my Body which is given for you: Do this in remembrance of Me. Likewise after supper He took the cup; and, when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of this; for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is

shed for you and for many for the remission of sins: Do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of Me." Such are the simple words.


On which observe, first, the Lord Jesus Christ gave thanks for the creatures of his own creation, or ever He consecrated them to this holy purpose, "as pledges of his love, and for a continual remembrance of his death, to our great and endless comfort." And what then? He who is unto us "both a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample of godly life," hath, by so doing, taught us to do the like:—"In every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." Mind, then, Christian Brethren, that we do so, for methinks that I shall say a hard but a true word, when I assert that if "account of all were kept, for one that prayeth, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' a hundred take their bread, and meat, and sleep too, which never pray

for it." Mind, then, I repeat, specially on the breaking of this bread, and the receiving of this cup, "to render thanks to Almighty God for all his benefits, briefly comprised in the death, passion, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, his dearly beloved Son. The which thing, because we ought chiefly at this table to solemnize, the godly fathers named it *Eucharistia*, i. e. thanksgiving; as if they should have said, "Now, above all other times, ye ought to laud and praise God. Now may you behold the matter, the cause, the beginning, and the end of all thanksgiving." Christian Brethren, "The hand of our God is upon all them for good that" so "seek Him," that so give thanks for the creatures of his hand!

II. Next observe, That the Lord Jesus Christ took bread and brake it, and declared it to be his body,—that He took the cup of wine, and declared it to be his blood,—thus consecrating them,


as He gave thanks, to a perpetual mystery, insomuch so, that from that time to this, as many as with a true penitent heart and lively faith receive these his creatures of bread and wine, “spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood—dwell in Christ, and Christ in them,—are one with Christ and Christ with them.” Full sure, the breaking of the bread doth point to his sacred body wounded on the cross for our transgressions; and the pouring out of the wine to the shedding of his all-precious blood! Bread which is the staff of life, and wine that cherisheth the heart of man, is to mind us of our redemption; and his flesh and his blood received in a mystery, do nourish up the faithful to life eternal, even as bread and wine support the life that now is.

III. And this, ye Christian people, is enough to be assured of, even as ye are assured in God’s holy word. Therefore, question not in your hearts, after



the fashion of the discontented Israelites, saying, "But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all besides this manna before our eyes!"—"our soul loatheth this light bread!"—thus as the prophet said, making "the table of the Lord" to be "contemptible." On the contrary, fervently, faithfully, joyfully, devoutly, receive the creatures of bread and wine—no common bread, no common wine—in remembrance of Christ's death and in obedience to his command, assured of the remission of sins by his alone cross and passion. As one said, "Let curious and sharp-witted men beat their heads about what question themselves will, the very letter of the word of Christ giveth plain security, that these mysteries do as nails fasten us to his very cross; that by them we draw out, as touching efficacy, force, and virtue, even the blood of his gored side, in the wounds of our Redeemer we then dip our tongues, we are dyed red both with-

in and without, our hunger is satisfied and our thirst for ever quenched: they are things wonderful which he feeleth, great which he seeth, and unheard of which he uttereth, whose soul is possessed with this Paschal Lamb, and made joyful in the strength of this new wine. This bread hath in it more than the substance which our eyes behold. This cup hallowed with solemn benediction availeth to the endless life and welfare both of soul and body, in that it serveth as well for a medicine to heal our infirmities, and purge our souls as for a sacrifice of thanksgiving,—with touching, it sanctifieth, it enlighteneth with belief, it truly conformeth us unto the image of Jesus Christ. What these elements are in themselves it skilleth not; it is enough that to me, which take them, they are the body and blood of Christ, his promise in witness hereof sufficeth; his word He knoweth which way to accomplish; why should any



cogitation possess the mind of a faithful communicant but this, "O my God, thou art true! O my soul, thou art happy?" And thus the words of the text come home again, as an assured truth, "The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him." But if so, the latter part of the verse is no less true, "His power and his wrath is against all them that forsake Him," as do all they who irreverently draw not nigh to the table of their Lord, when his dying command was this, "This do in remembrance of me!" Oh then, ye Christian people, do ye mould the Psalmist's words to prayer and praise, saying, "If I forget thee," my Saviour, "let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; yea, if I prefer not" thy holy table "in my mirth." "What reward shall I give unto the Lord, for all the benefits which He hath done unto me! I will receive the cup



of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows now in the presence of all his people." "I will wash my hands in innocency, O Lord, and so will I go to thine altar; That I may shew the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works."

Even so with praise and thanksgiving and eucharist, shew, in the receiving of the Holy Communion, that you are united with Christ your head, "very members incorporate in his mystical body," and "also heirs through hope" of the saints' everlasting rest in heaven, "through the merits of his most precious death and passion." "Buried with Him in baptism" in your early years, let this second Sacrament tell how you bear in mind the continual remembrance of *His* death, which is *your* life. Never rest contented till yourselves and children compass the altar, till you can say with joyful assurance, "BEHOLD, I AND THE CHILDREN WHOM THE LORD HATH GIVEN

ME ;”—with joyful assurance, because here on earth they are God’s children, consigned in this world to “the knowledge of his truth,” and in the world to come unto “life everlasting !”

And thus much for the present as concerns this our “sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving,”—the Sacrament withal of peace and of union and of concord, showed forth after “the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship . . . in breaking of bread and in prayers.” On Sunday next, I purpose, through God’s assistance,—without which neither you nor I can think or speak,—to say a word on the preparation for, as well as on the excuses men use to make relative to, this Holy Sacrament. Meanwhile, as Paul said to the elders of Ephesus called together at Miletum, “I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”

## SERMON IV.

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PREPARATION FOR, AND EXCUSES RELATIVE  
TO, THE LORD'S SUPPER.

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LUKE xix. 7.

“And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying,  
That he was gone to be a guest with a man that is  
a sinner.”

So thought they of the publican,  
Zacchæus! But, like Matthew, he  
had henceforth better things than “the  
receipt of custom” to look to; even to  
the Lord Jesus, who said unto him,  
“This day is salvation come to this  
house, forsomuch as he also is a son of  
Abraham. For the Son of man is come

to seek and to save that which was lost." Tax and tribute gatherer though he was unto the Romans, which is, in Scripture, the meaning of the word "publican;" heathen and sinner, as the bystanding Jews called him, yet, knowing what was in his heart, He, the Lord Christ, who knoweth long before what is in the hearts of men, gave him understanding in this truth, that "they which are of faith," of what nation soever in the wide world, "the same are the children of Abraham." From those who, rooted in the faith, do their Lord's will, no privilege is withheld!

But, that the Lord should go "to be a guest with a man that was a sinner," seeing that they themselves, in their own estimation, were righteous, was a stumbling-block to the Scribes and Pharisees. They could not unriddle the matter. It was a dark saying, and a parable put into act. And more than once was a like objection made on their

part, and a like answer on our blessed Lord's. As, for example, on the call of Matthew, who is the same with Levi. "And after these things," that is to say, after certain marvellous acts which He had done, "he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me. And he left all, rose up, and followed him. And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them. But their Scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners? And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Comfortable and comforting words, Christian Brethren! and how different

from theirs who said of Him, who spake as never man spake, and did as never man did, "That he was gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner!" Sure enough, full of envy, hatred, and malice, were such words! We read them with pain and wonder, not considering that our ownselves may have, some time or another, said the like!

Therefore, on the present occasion, when I purpose to speak of the Preparation for the Lord's Supper, as well as to touch upon some excuses which men make for not presenting themselves at that Holy Table, which is the refuge of all penitent sinners, I would show you, in a simple way, how those, who might be sorry to think so, do, not unfrequently, fall into a like uncharitable error with these Scribes and Pharisees, who reviled the Lord of life. This, then, let me show you, in a very few words, and so pass on to other matters.

And, who hath not heard some such

sayings as these?—No doubt our Lord hath said, “This do in remembrance of me.” He hath called us to his Holy Table, and hath bade us partake of his blessed Body and Blood, consigning unto us, in the due participation thereof, the remission of sins. But, we observe not that they are the better who do frequent that Holy Table. Many eat and drink there, and go away, and altogether forget, or seem to forget, the benefits to be received thereby. They leave the Supper of the Lord, nor wiser nor better men. Others again, as though there were reason in such remarks, are loud in saying, That hypocrites and pretenders to holiness draw nigh there and kneel before the Lord their Maker. We will not be of the number of such; we will hold back till a convenient time; we will not be guests with those sinners who “eat and drink, and rise up to play.”—Now I do assert, from long and careful intercourse, with the poor

especially, that such reasoning as this,—or, I should rather call it, mere wicked sophistry, is often made use of;—and I wish to add, that when any hold back under such pretences,—and without being aware that they are, on other accounts, most unfit to approach the Table of the Lord,—they are guilty of the very thing the Lord reproved in the Scribes and the Pharisees. It is such that say of the Pious Communicant, what they said of the Lord of life, “That he is gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner!” They forget that this Table is the hope, and rest, and sure refuge of those sinners whom Christ came to save. They cannot realize the force of the prayer and the confession, “We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy table;” but, thither



## 64 PREPARATION FOR, AND EXCUSES

thou hast commanded us to come, and thither we do come, in full assurance that "this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

And thus, having applied the text, I will say a word about Preparation, referring you, as I have always done, to the service itself for spiritual teaching. For, whatever other useful books you may take in hand—and with such you may always be supplied—yet, after all, the teaching of the Prayer Book is paramount. Equal to it you will find none.

But, as regards your approach to these Holy Mysteries which the faithful do receive "for the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby," he doth approach most reverently who searches and tries his life and conversation, squaring it as best he may, and through grace given, by the

rule of Christ, which is none other than the rule of faith, working by love, and hasting to run in the way of his commandments. For, as a holy faith and a holy life admit of no separation, and as any new light without holiness unto the Lord is but a vapour that leadeth astray: so he that draweth nigh to this Holy Sacrament with a clean heart and a right mind, and with a determination, in itself however weak, to walk in Christ's most holy steps, — that man, poor, weak, and sinful creature as he is, is nevertheless on the Great King's high-road unto everlasting life. To him more grace is given; he receiveth grace for grace; and the sign of the cross, which was signed on his forehead at his baptism, waxeth brighter and brighter, declaring him to be, even as he promised to be, a good soldier of Jesus Christ, warring alway against sin, the world, and the devil. This, Christian Brethren, apart from all popular fallacies

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and seraphic cant, I maintain to be the properest Preparation for the Lord's Supper. And because to live a holy life is more or less a gift—for of ourselves we can do nothing—therefore do we well pray in the Litany that our good Lord would be pleased “to keep and strengthen us in the true worshipping” of Him, explained there to be “righteousness and holiness of life.” And a good apprehension (nay, the best, for he spake inspired words,) had St. Paul of the mind which was in Christ Jesus when he said, “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.” Altogether in unison with which, and with all received no-

tions of a Pious Communicant, are those words in the first Exhortation: "If any of you be a blasphemer of God, an hinderer or slanderer of his word, an adulterer, or be in malice, or envy, or any other grievous crime, repent you of your sins, or else come not to that Holy Table; lest, after the taking of that Holy Sacrament, the devil enter into you, as he entered into Judas, and fill you full of all iniquities, and bring you to destruction both of body and soul." To which I will add, because some people have very wild and incoherent notions about Preparation for the Lord's Supper, these remarkable words of one who wrote well and wisely of the institution and reception of this Holy Sacrament: "Indeed, we use to make a sport of the greatest instruments of religion, when we come to them after an *habitual* vice, whose face we have, it may be, wetted with a tear, and breathed upon it with a sigh, and abstained from the worst of

crimes for two or three days, and come to the Sacrament to be purged, and to take our rise by going a little back from our sin, that afterwards we may leap into it with more violence, and enter into its utmost angle—this is dishonouring the body of our Lord, and deceiving ourselves. Christ and Belial cannot cohabit. Unless we have left all our sins, and have no fondness of affection toward them; unless we hate them, which then we shall best know when we leave them, and with complacency entertain their contraries,”—Christ hath no abiding part with us: but, if we do, “then Christ hath washed our feet, and then He invites us to his Holy Supper. Hands dipped in blood, or polluted with unlawful gains, or stained with the spots of the flesh, are most unfit to handle the Holy Body of our Lord, and minister nourishment to the soul. Christ loves not to enter into the mouth full of cursings, oaths, blasphemies, revilings, or

evil-speakings; and a heart full of vain and vicious thoughts stinks like the lake of Sodom; He finds no rest there; and when He enters, He is vexed with the unclean conversation of the impure inhabitants, and flies from them with the wings of a dove, that He may retire to pure and whiter habitations."

And thus much for Preparation generally. But, besides this, a special Preparation is at all times necessary as we would "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Holy and heavenly things,—spiritual manna, which, so to say, is angels' food,—and "the blood of Christ which is verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper" under the symbol of consecrated wine,—these emblems of death so precious, and pledges of life to the godly receiver, must not be taken as common food, but as sacred viands. That Preparation, which by God's grace

ends in sanctification, is to be ever in the Pious Communicant's thoughts. And because it was not so in the thoughts of the profane Corinthian Communicants, it turned to their harm, in some cases was their death. As St. Paul told them in his teaching, "Whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body," that is to say, "eateth and drinketh just judgment and condemnation to himself, not considering the greatness of this Mystery, and making no difference betwixt this sacred bread, which is sacramentally the body of Christ, and the other common and ordinary bread." And the result was as I said, many were "weak and sickly,"

and "many" slept,—were stricken with death itself; whereas, had they eaten and had they drunk in faith, like Elijah the prophet of the Lord, they might have gone on to their lives' end "in the strength of that meat" which cherisheth the souls of God's people, and of which it can be verily and truly said: "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die."

Therefore, prepare yourselves, ye Christian People! With a holy faith and with a holy life, with forgiving tempers and love unfeigned, with lowly and with humble hearts, draw ye nigh and take this Holy Sacrament to your comfort. And withal consider that "this Sacrament is intended to unite the spirits and affections of the world, and that it is diffusive and powerful to this purpose (for "we are one body," saith St. Paul, because "we partake of one bread");"—so that "possibly we may have



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reason to say, that the wars of kingdoms, the animosity of families, the infinite multitude of law-suits, the personal hatreds, and the universal want of charity, which hath made the world miserable and wicked, may in a great degree be attributed to the neglect of this great symbol and instrument of charity. The Chalice of the Sacrament is called by St. Paul, "the cup of blessing;" and if children need every day to beg blessings of their parents, if we also thirst not after this cup of blessing, blessing may be far from us. It is called "the communication of the blood of Christ;" and it is not imaginable *that* man should love heaven, or felicity, or his Lord, that desires not perpetually to bathe in that salutary stream, the blood of the Holy Jesus, the immaculate Lamb of God." And thus much for Preparation, which each one must see to, (for there is no laying down definite rules to suit each man's case,) as

best he may. That wise Hebrew spake not without his host when he said, "A man's mind is sometimes wont to tell him more than seven watchmen that sit above in an high tower." And so it is on this matter, "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?" Therefore, examine yourselves well and wisely, and, in preparing for this Holy Sacrament, "PREPARE TO MEET YOUR GOD."

And this leads me to the last point I wished to consider, that is, the excuses men make, when they are not willing to communicate. And here, as many a time and oft before, I cannot do better than refer you to the Second Exhortation, in which the man, whose mouth is filled with excuses, is set down in the quietest and most decisive manner. As the Scripture speaketh, so speaketh it, homewards, altogether, and to the purpose:—"Ye know how grievous and unkind a thing it is, when a man hath

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prepared a rich feast, decked his table with all kind of provision, so that there lacketh nothing but the guests to sit down; and yet they who are called (without any cause), most unthankfully refuse to come. Which of you in such a case, would not be moved? Who would not think a great injury and wrong done unto him? Wherefore, most dearly beloved in Christ, take ye good heed, lest ye, withdrawing yourselves from this Holy Supper, provoke God's indignation against you. It is an easy matter for a man to say, I will not communicate, because I am otherwise hindered with worldly business. But such excuses are not so easily accepted and allowed before God. If a man say, I am a grievous sinner, and therefore am afraid to come: wherefore then do ye not repent and amend? When God calleth you, are ye not ashamed to say ye will not come? When ye should return to God, will ye excuse

yourselves, and say ye are not ready? Consider earnestly with yourselves how little such feigned excuses will avail before God."

Christian Brethren, excuses are but tokens of frailty and of sin, in all things appertaining to God. In human affairs, when a frail man dealeth with a frail man, they may be, in the language of the world, "pleas offered in extenuation, or apologies;" but Christian duties are straightforward things: and when, as for example in this Holy Sacrament, Christ hath said, "This do in remembrance of me," any excuse is but a certain sure sign that man thinks God may be disobeyed. "These things hast thou done, and I held my tongue, and thou thoughtest wickedly that I am even such a one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set before thee the things that thou hast done." As certainly as "salvation is of the Lord," so certainly God is not mocked! His com-

mandment we cannot wilfully disobey and live!

And now, having put this in as plain a light as I could, let me entreat you not to think in your hearts of any willing hearted, though in time past a sinful, communicant, that he is an unsuitable guest at the Lord's table. Murmur not, and say not with the Scribes and Pharisees, that the Lord of life is "gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner." On the contrary, rejoice that such are received in the Beloved; and as regards each man individually, let him smite his own breast, and say, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" O well is he and happy shall he be that doeth so! Humble and contrite, his soul shall not faint within him; he shall not be sent empty away, but filled with good things. As it is elsewhere said, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!" "Blessed are they which are called to the marriage

supper of the Lamb!" Such as do attend with faithful and true hearts are blessed here on earth, and their reversion is, through Christ's atoning blood poured out, "the inheritance of the saints in light."

And thus, "as of the ability which God" hath given me, have I laid before you this matter also. "Consider of it, take advice," "that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ." One point yet remains, which I must defer to a future occasion—that is to say, the matter of rejection, or repelling any from this Holy Sacrament,—a point of the utmost Christian caution, and never to be done, except in cases where the unfitness of the individual admits of no reasonable doubt. For as in common law, so here, if there be a doubt, it is to be in favour of one who should present himself at so holy and heavenly a feast. "The Spirit of God" may be "upon him also" as it came

upon Saul when none expected it, giving origin to the proverb, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

I will only add, for each pious communicant's consideration, the words of our blessed Lord unto Peter, "WHEN THOU ART CONVERTED, STRENGTHEN THY BRETHREN."

## SERMON V.

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### QUESTION OF REPELLING FROM THE LORD'S SUPPER CONSIDERED.

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LUKE xiv. 23, 24.

“And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.”

THESE words of our blessed Lord will very well apply to the point reserved for separate consideration:—I mean, the question of repelling from the Holy Communion. But first let the passage be recited at length in which, under the



Parable of the Great Supper, our Saviour showeth how worldly-minded men who contemn the word of God shall be shut out of heaven. "A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come:"—in all of which words there is a covert allusion to that proclamation in the book of Deuteronomy which bore reference to those who might be dismissed from any war which the children of the people had in hand. If made, certain excuses, under the law, might be avail-

able, though excuses could be never wise. Moreover it was added further, "What man is there that is fearful and faint-hearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart." But, to let that pass, and to proceed with the parable, which goes on thus:—"So that servant came, and shewed his Lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper."

Whatever excuses it may have pleased

God to wink at under the law, and in times of ignorance, these would serve no more when "the fulness of the time was come," and the "truth as it is in Jesus" made known to such as would receive it. And under this impression it is that this very Parable is adopted into the Second Exhortation, and engrafted after this manner: "Consider earnestly with yourselves how little such feigned excuses will avail before God. They that refused the feast in the Gospel because they had bought a farm, or would try their yokes of oxen, or because they were married, were not so excused, but counted unworthy of the heavenly feast;" in other words, they were repelled from it, as "open and notorious evil livers" are to be repelled from that holy and heavenly Supper of the Lord which is "a feast of good things" unto all sin-laden and truly penitent souls. Yea, such are even to be compelled to come in—

persuasion the most earnest, which is, as it were, a holy violence, is to be used toward such. Poor, maimed, halt, and blind, in their own estimation, the Lord is the Healer of them all, and calleth them unto Himself, and in them is the saying true, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!" None who humble themselves as they ought to do under the mighty hand of God shall be cast out of the kingdom of God on earth, much less from that kingdom which is to come hereafter. And so, as respects the Supper of the Lord, the exhortation to the willing-hearted, the faithful, and the true, is this:—"Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled!" It is only to the profane and the notoriously evil livers that it is refused—only to those who have unthankfully refused to come, that it is at length said, "None of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper."

And thus, or ever I proceed to the particular question in hand, you see that it is the great business of the Christian Minister to call in *to*, and not to repel *from*, the Supper of the Lord, the people committed to his charge;—as for the good of others, so for his own good likewise, mindful of that Ember Prayer, grounded on the most sure warrant of Scripture: “To those which shall be ordained to any holy function give thy grace and heavenly benediction; that both by their life and doctrine they may set forth thy glory, and set forward the salvation of all men; through Jesus Christ our Lord.” And the words of the Homily are much to the purpose, which declare that “Our Lord and Saviour thought it not sufficient to purchase for us his Father’s favour again, (which is that deep fountain of all goodness and eternal life,) but also invented the ways most wisely, whereby they might redound to our commodity

and profit. Which, although it seem of small virtue to some, yet, being rightly done by the faithful, it doth not only help their weakness, (who be by their poisoned nature readier to remember injuries than benefits,) but strengtheneth and comforteth their inward man with peace and gladness, and maketh them thankful to their Redeemer, with diligent care and godly conversation."

But to turn now to the question of repelling from the Supper of the Lord, —the great peril of the unworthy receiving thereof being admitted by all who profess and call themselves Christians.

And here, the Rubric which precedes the Communion Service, in ordinary cases, gives the best instruction, interpreted, as it ought to be, by the Exhortations and the Canons, and that PLAIN COMMON SENSE OF A CHRISTIAN MAN, WHICH, WHEN UNDER THE DOMINION OF GRACE, IS ALWAYS AT ONE WITH GOD'S

**HOLY WORD.** A point this necessary to be noted, because with profane and unreasonable men opposition is a part of their life, and when we have to deal with such we need to call to mind our Saviour's warning, and to be "wise as serpents,"—remembering that the statute law supersedes the Canons, and that nothing amounts to notoriety in law "less than confession in an open court, or conviction by a sentence of the judge." This, I say, whilst we resolutely do our duty, is nevertheless to be borne in mind, or we may become needlessly, and to no profit, entangled "by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" even those who speak the truth in love.

Then, what says the Rubric? "If any of those," who have signified that they intend to be partakers of the Holy Communion, "be an open and notorious evil liver, or have done any wrong to

his neighbour by word or deed, *so that the congregation be thereby offended*, the Curate, having knowledge thereof, shall call him and advertise him, that in any wise he presume not to come to the Lord's Table until he hath openly declared himself to have truly repented and amended his former naughty life, that *the congregation may thereby be satisfied which before were offended*; and that he hath recompensed the parties to whom he hath done wrong; or, at least, declare himself to be in full purpose so to do as soon as he conveniently may." So stands this portion of the Rubric, in which you will observe how cautious the Church is that the congregation be not offended,—that at so holy a time and season no stumbling-block be thrown in their way, and their thoughts diverted from the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood of our Saviour Christ.

But this is not all. The Rubric pro-



ceeds to say, "The same order shall the Curate use with those betwixt whom he perceiveth malice and hatred to reign; not suffering them to be partakers of the Lord's Table, until he know them to be reconciled. And if one of the parties so at variance be content to forgive from the bottom of his heart all that the other hath trespassed against him, and to make amends for that he himself hath offended, and the other party will not be persuaded to a godly unity, but remain still in his frowardness and malice, the minister in that case ought to admit the penitent person to the Holy Communion, and not him that is obstinate. Provided that every minister so repelling any, as is specified in this or the next precedent paragraph of this Rubric, shall be obliged to give an account of the same to the ordinary within fourteen days after at the farthest. And the ordinary shall proceed against the offending person according to the Canon."

Such are the two divisions of the Rubric relative to repelling from the Holy Communion, and in the both you cannot fail to observe that the interests of the congregation are cared for; and how the Curate, or Officiating Minister, is made responsible to his Ordinary,—that is to say, generally, his Bishop. And these two points are ruled by the Rubric:—1st. No person can be repelled, in ordinary cases, till admonished. 2nd. When admonished and repelled, it is only till such time as the advice of the Ordinary can be had, who is to proceed according to the Canon. Of the legal difficulties here before alluded to, I do not stop to speak. Let it be sufficient to say, that such there are. This, however, is clear, that the intent of the Church is, that none are to be admitted to the Holy Communion “which be openly known to live in sin notorious, without repentance,” being thereby, “notoriously offensive to the congre-

gation ;” or, as it is expressed in another Canon, “and such notorious offenders shall not be admitted to the Holy Communion, till they be reformed.” To this, the language of the Rubric and the Canons, if we add the words of the First Exhortation, we shall surely have the mind of our Church ;—“ If ye shall perceive your offences to be such as are not only against God, but also against your neighbours, then ye shall reconcile yourselves unto them ; being ready to make restitution and satisfaction, according to the uttermost of your powers, for all injuries and wrongs done by you to any other ; and being likewise ready to forgive others that have offended you, as ye would have forgiveness of your offences at God’s hand ; for otherwise the receiving of the Holy Communion doth nothing else but increase your damnation. Therefore, if any of you be a blasphemer of God, an hinderer or slanderer of his Word, an

adulterer, or be in malice, or envy, or any other grievous crime, repent you of your sins, or else come not to that holy table; lest after taking of that holy Sacrament, the devil enter into you, as he entered into Judas, and fill you full of all iniquities, and bring you to destruction both of body and soul."

After any exhortation to the contrary, ungodly men, under a false face, may yet present themselves; but if they do, it is at their own peril. "All that minister to souls," says one, "are to tell them of their dangers, and by all the efforts of their office, to present them pure and spotless unto God. The seers must take care that the people may see, lest by their blindness they fall into the bottomless pit. And when the Curates of souls have declared the will of God in this instance, and denounced his judgments to unworthy communicants, and told to all that present themselves, who are worthy, and who are not, they have

delivered their own souls; all that remains is, that every person take care concerning his own affairs."

But then comes the question. Suppose some irreverently desperate and evil man will thrust himself on the congregation to their scandal, and, however irreverently he walks, will not withdraw himself: under such circumstances what is to be done?—The statute law might certainly overrule, and civil penalties might be the result of repelling; but there is One above all, that is, God, and He is to be obeyed. He is to be worshipped with a holy worship, and His Holy Table is not to be profaned, or made contemptible. And under these circumstances, the reply of Peter and John, humbly and reverently used, is no unfit one for the Minister of those Holy Mysteries which God hath set apart and not man:—"Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge

ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Certainly, when our own interest seems only at stake, it is better to abide pains or penalties; and it was a shrewd message which, in days gone by, a good Archbishop sent unto his friend, whom he thought overmuch occupied in the statutes of the law, "YOU HAVE STUDIED THE COMMON LAW LONG ENOUGH, YOU SHOULD HENCEFORTH STUDY THE LAW OF GOD." And he accompanied the message with a copy of the New Testament. It is possible, no doubt, to be over timid—over zealous for human laws which sometimes may not square with the law of God; and when such is the case, the question in the Ordering of Priests is no unfit remembrancer, "Will you then give your faithful diligence always so to minister the doctrine and Sacraments, and the discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and as this Church and realm hath received the

same according to the commandments of God; so that you may teach the people committed to your care and charge, with all diligence to keep and observe the same?" Whereto, the answer is, "I will do so, by the help of God!" And woe be to him that doth not so! Woe be to him that, having engaged by a sacramental oath to be a true soldier of Jesus Christ, and to bear his standard, shall fight under the false colours of the world! "Woe be to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock!" Ye Christian people! "A faithful ambassador is health;" and the Scripture word is this, "He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully." Therefore, should any notoriously evil liver and blasphemer—one who has sinned, and will sin on—demand at my hands the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, I shall not administer it—let statute law take its course; for, "What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord."

At the same time let me note again the great care taken by the Church that none be dismissed without a cause, specially by that branch of Christ's holy Catholic Church in these realms to which we are privileged to belong; for every Minister refusing is responsible, and must, after warning, assign sufficient reason. And this, Christian Brethren, is a consideration most prudential; for, as long ago noted down by LYNDWOOD, "Every Christian hath a right in receiving the Eucharist, unless he loses it by deadly sin; therefore, when it does not appear in the face of the Church, that such a one hath lost his right, it ought not, in the face of the Church, to be denied to him; otherwise a license would be given to evil priests, according to their pleasure, with this punishment to afflict whom they list." And the simple truth is, it is the pleasure of the Lord that is to be looked to, not our own; and happy that Minister about



holy things of whom it can be said, if we may reverently apply the prophetic words, "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand."

And thus I return to the position with which I started, that, although the ungodly and the profane are ill-assorted guests at the Table of the Lord, our business is to drive none away from this holy and heavenly feast, but to be mindful of words like these, "Reproach not a man that turneth from sin; but remember that we are all worthy of punishment." And so, though we warn all to examine themselves, and to prove their own selves, and to confess themselves to Almighty God, yet we do exhort all to come, in God's name, and to eat and drink abundantly to their soul's health; and if none of those that were bidden *will* taste of this Supper, the fault lies at their own door. It is the Scripture word, not ours, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ,

let him be Anathema Maranatha." He bringeth a curse upon himself, and he must bear it. As for the Ministry in general, they but do as our blessed Lord did in case of those who brought unto him the woman taken in adultery, of whom we read, that, "being convicted by their own conscience," they "went out one by one." And so, on this matter, ordinarily, we leave men to their own consciences. It is only in extraordinary and extreme cases when otherwise it is done. Our duty and our pleasure is rather to bid as many as may be, christianly and charitably interpreting our blessed Lord's own words, "Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage." Doubt there can be none but that, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb."

Certainly, "these," Christian Brethren, "are the true sayings of God."

The sum of the whole matter is, that to repel any from this Sacrament is, so to say, *strange work*. On the contrary, the invitation to it is wide as the Christian world, and the fewness of communicants, at any time or place, is not the Church's fault, but the fault of a disobedient and backsliding people, who are cherished nevertheless "according to the merciful example and precepts whereby the Gospel of Christ hath taught us towards such to show compassion, to receive them with lenity and all meekness; if any thing be shaken in them, to strengthen it; not to quench with delays and jealousies that feeble smoke of conformity which seemeth to breathe from them, but to build wheresoever there is any foundation, to add perfection unto slender beginnings; and that, as by other offices

of piety, even so by this very food of life which Christ hath left in his Church, not only for preservation of strength but also for relief of weakness."

I will only add these words of the Proverbs, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief."

## SERMON VI.

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### UNTEMPERED MORTER OPPOSED TO SPIRITUAL BUILDING.

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EZEK. xiii. 10.

“One built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar.”

You, and I, and all of us, Christian Brethren, have to look constantly to our houses, and to set them well in order. They need continual repairs, and dilapidations are costly. Their ruin often ruins us, or, at least, cripples our ways and means, and hampers our resources. And wise is the proverb, “Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in

the field; and afterwards build thine house." There is no building at hazard; and a wall built up in haste, and with "untempered mortar," will never stand. In such a matter lack of preparation, and bad materials, only entail loss and damage. And that saying of our blessed Lord's is very applicable, "Which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish." And thus are we schooled from the every-day concerns of life,—even from brick and mortar,—in matters appertaining to salvation; and in both cases a wise and provident preparation is necessary, and "untempered mortar" is as useless and inefficient in the spiritual building up of a man in our most

holy faith, as it would be in the building up of any the material fabrics of the land. "Say unto them that daub it with untempered mortar, that it shall fall," in every-day life is a plain common-sense reply, easily understood of all. The very stone "shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it!"

But, Christian Brethren, even after all due forethought has been taken, and all due preparation made, the handy-work of man will perish. **PERISHABLE IS MARKED UPON ALL HIS GOODS.** Mortal possessions, and the buildings of mortals, have a time and a stint, beyond which they will not endure. Stone and mortar wear out, and good works outlast both tombs and sepulchres. Build as we may, and with all the care we may, those that come after us will find dilapidations, and must put their hand to repairs lest their houses tumble about their ears, and the dust of them

blind their eyes. Nay, more: repairs cannot patch up for ever; but walls are brought down to the ground, and the foundations thereof discovered, and man's weakness is written upon every stone, and upon the rubbish of the ruinous heap!

And what, to a thoughtful mind, and to the religious hearted, is the conclusion from the perishable things of this world? Is it like the heathen man's, when he saw before him, a spectacle of desolation! the once magnificent cities of Greece, and from their fall encouraged his friend to mourn no more over his daughter's demise, who, if she had not died when she did, must yet, within a few fleeting years, have met the fate to which she was born? Not so, Christian Brethren; for such were but a cold solace on the loss of those we have loved with an undivided love. On the contrary, the wreck and ruin of things around us, their decay, or readiness to



decay, teaches us to look higher, and to consider how He that made the world was a wise Master-Builder. It continueth as it was, and is not subject to decay. The sun, and the moon, and the stars, in their courses, roll on as at the first, through space; and the earth that now is shall abide its time, whilst the heaven of heavens is ignorant of wear and tear. God buildeth for eternity, man for time! It is we that "build up a wall, and daub it with untempered mortar;" but the God, "in whom we live, and move, and have our being," doth not so! Yea, more: when those around us die, and the building of their bodies is taken down, by faith we are assured that they shall be builded up again. There is an earthly building, and there is a spiritual building, and to the latter we do look in hope! "For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God,

an house not made with hands,"—free; that is, from untempered mortar,—“eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house, which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight.) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent we may be accepted of him. For we must all

appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

Hence, by the wise and religious-hearted, the Spiritual Building is looked to, that is to say, "EDIFICATION," or "BUILDING UP IN THE FAITH," by which the justified of the Lord Jesus shall live. It is no temporary building that we should look to, no booth, or tabernacle, or earthly house of this dwelling, but an house eternal in the heavens, where Christ our life is gone before, and meanwhile is "the light of men," lest they should abide in the darkness, and not comprehend His great salvation, and the blessedness of those "many mansions" in His Father's house, set apart as the "inheritance of the saints in light!" No crumbling mansions these, and built with "untempered mortar," but enduring abodes, whose

founder and maker and builder is the God of the spirits of the flesh !

And therefore, Christian Brethren, from these words of Ezekiel, I do counsel you to build for eternity. Lay to heart the perishable and fleeting state of things here, and look unto Him, that is to say, unto Christ Jesus, who "came and preached peace to you, which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." So that, as St. Paul continues to say, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God ; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone ; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord : In whom ye also are builded together, for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

And here, by comparing Scripture with Scripture, and holy words together, you may arrive at the conclusion, that the common term "EDIFICATION" is pretty much the same as "The spiritual building of your bodies fitly framed together," or, "Growth in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." In fact the words "EDIFICATION" and "EDIFY," in the Bible, always relate to heavenly knowledge consummated in practice, and are opposed to that "untempered mortar" which is the issue and the product of a man's hands, and will never bind to eternity,—never hold fast the house of our bodies "to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him." In a word, "untempered mortar,"—that is, an unholy life, mock-cemented with hypocrisy,—can never hold us together as "lively stones,—built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood,

to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." So that when we do our duty to GOD we "edify" ourselves, and are "edified," for God ever leadeth those onwards toward perfection who walk in his most holy ways. And when we do our duty to our NEIGHBOUR also, then do we "edify" ourselves and are "edified;"—for, brotherly kindness and charity, concord and unity, are no mean stones in the Christian building;—yea, saith the Apostle, "charity edifieth." And the conclusion is pretty much in accordance with those verses in the Epistle to the Romans, "He that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."

Christian Brethren, happy are they who so do! It is well with them now, it is well with them hereafter; for, once builded up in a holy faith, death to

such is but a sleep, and a "glorious body" is their reversion. They builded not with "untempered mortar," but builded for eternity, and when they depart hence, and are no more seen, God shall build them up again. "The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter upon peace; they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness." As one said, "No man is superannuated in the grave, that he is too old to enter into heaven, where the Master of the house is THE ANCIENT OF DAYS. No man is bedridden with age in the grave, that he cannot rise. It is not with God as it is with man; we do, but God does not, forget the dead." Not so! For that they builded not with "untempered mortar," He doth build them up again. To the dust of a thousand generations He saith, "Thou shalt

be built." To the unhinged temple of these our mortal bodies, "Thy foundation shall be laid!" Ye Christian Builders, whose good works do follow you, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." And so it is that the belief in the Resurrection of the body,—in the building up again of these our mortal tabernacles,—"hath a necessary reflection upon this life, by way of preparation for the next, as deterring from sin, as encouraging to holiness, as comforting in affliction. How can any man commit a deliberate sin, while he thinks that he must rise and stand before the judgment-seat, and give an account, and



suffer for ever the punishment due unto it? What pleasure can entice him, what inclination can betray him for a momentary satisfaction to incur an eternal rejection! How can we defile that body which shall never be raised to glory hereafter, except it have become the temple of the Holy Ghost! St. Paul, who hath delivered the doctrine, hath taught us by his own example what work is expected to be wrought upon our souls by it. "I have hope," saith he, "towards God, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men." This is the proper work of a true belief and a full persuasion of a resurrection; and he which is really possessed with this hope, cannot choose but purify himself; "always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as he knoweth that his labour is not in

vain in the Lord." This encourageth all drooping spirits, this sustaineth all fainting hearts, this sweeteneth all present miseries, this lighteneth all heavy burdens, this encourageth in all dangers, this supporteth in all calamities." Say what the world may, there is nothing like building for eternity, nothing like spiritual edification, which hath no dealing with "untempered mortar." Full sure, the result of being builded up in Christ's most holy faith, is happiness and assurance for ever. Trouble there may be outwardly, and tribulation, so as to purify us, but inwardly "joy of the Holy Ghost." The joy that is set before us, when we build in faith, as Nehemiah did, and have "a mind to work," kindles "the hope of immortality, furthers our joy in affliction, and sweetens to God's saints the sour of the cross." And good and faithful men, in all ages, have found, that "it is only a true sense and relish of God, that can

tame and master that rage of our insatiable and restless desires, which is still forcing us out of ourselves to seek some perfect good,—that which, from a latent sense of our own souls, we feel ourselves to want . . . . And thus as heaven, love, joy, peace, serenity, and all that which happiness is, buds and blossoms out of holy and godlike spirits; so also hell and misery will perpetually spring out of impure minds, distracted with envy, malice, ambition, self-will, or any inordinate loves to any particular thing” on this side of the grave.

Such is the difference between building for this world and building for the next! Such the contrast between “untempered mortar” and Spiritual Edification! So that if any say, out of “a heart exercised in covetous practices,” We will join hand to hand, and field to field, and enjoy the good things that are present, and take no thought for eternity, methinks these words of the

Prophet Jeremiah are the strongest ever written! spiritually or literally understood:—"Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work; that saith, I will build me a wide house and large chambers, and cutteth him out windows; and it is cieled with cedar, and painted with vermilion. Shalt thou reign, because thou closest thyself in cedar? did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, and then it was well with him? He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: Was not this to know me? saith the Lord. But thine eyes and thine heart are not but for thy covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do it. Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah; They shall not lament

for him, saying, Ah my brother! or, Ah sister! They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah lord! or, Ah his glory! He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem." Such was the end of a bad man, to whom this world was every thing, and who could find no convenient time to prepare to meet his God!

But, otherwise far, as we have seen, is the condition of one whose thoughts have been in heaven before him,—who has built no castles in the air, but built for eternity; as the Psalmist saith, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace." Better he, though the poorest of the poor, than the purple king of Judah that builded with "untempered mortar;" that took no care for his soul's health, and had no thought for things to come, being wholly occupied in things present which perish in the using.

Christian Brethren, from this time

forth at least, contrast ye well together “untempered mortar” and Spiritual Edification! And if, in your every-day life, ye do see those who, so to say, carelessly “build up a wall,”—whilst others, equally careless and equally wicked, only “daub it with untempered morter;”—in other words, if ye do see those who will lead unholy lives, and who will not take thought for eternity, and for that dread time when the Lord Jesus Christ “shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and dead;”—mark those men, and so do not ye! assured of this truth, that “the greatest knowledge of a Christian is to know the cross of Christ, and the greatest knowing of a churchman is to build the body of Christ;”—that Christian temple of the Communion of Saints in which all who have loved holiness are spiritual stones, Christ Himself being that “chief corner-stone,” in whom

whosoever believeth, "shall not be confounded."

Let me only add, how great a comfort it must be to us all to know that such of our departed ones as are gone before, —*as* they builded for eternity, *so* shall they be builded up again. And mark, all those *do* build for eternity, who, with a lively faith in Christ their Saviour, thankfully and willingly do their duty in that state of life in which it has pleased God to place them. Their departure hence is but a departure and a sleep; for the God that saveth them "is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him." The earthly scaffolding of man's mortal body is but unfastened and taken down to be builded up again. As our blessed Lord said unto his disciples, "BECAUSE I LIVE, YE SHALL LIVE ALSO."

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This sermon was preached the Sunday after the death of my old faithful Schoolmaster, CHARLES RUFF,

**OPPOSED TO SPIRITUAL BUILDING. 119**

—who for thirty-four years had quietly and usefully discharged the duties of his vocation. Let me say to each and all of my parishioners,—

**“GO AND DO THOU LIKEWISE.”**

**THE END.**



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